

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

Control: 13223
Rec'd: DECEMBER 22, 1965
10:29 AMEUR
Info

FROM: BONN

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 1965, DECEMBER 22, 1 PM

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PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 1965, REPEATED INFORMATION PRIORITY BERLIN 389

REPEATED INFORMATION USAREUR HEIDELBERG 361 BY OTHER MEANS.

FOR MURPHY AND REINSTEIN FROM BRUCE

OCB

RE DEPARTMENT TELEGRAM 1675

CIA

OSD

ARMY

NAVY

AIR

NIC

NO USE, AS STATED PREVIOUS EMBASSY TELEGRAMS, RAISING THESE POINTS AGAIN AT THIS TIME WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH EMBASSIES HERE, WHO ARE COMMITTED ALREADY BY INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

I WAS UNDER IMPRESSION ALL BERLIN ACCESS QUESTIONS WERE NOW UNDER HIGH LEVEL REVIEW WASHINGTON AND THERE MIGHT BE OPPORTUNITY FOR DEPARTURES FROM PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED POSITIONS. IF SUCH DEPARTURE INVOLVED FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS TRIPARTITE UNDERSTANDINGS, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT CONSULTATION DIRECTLY WITH FRENCH AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS VIA WASHINGTON WOULD RESULT IN SPEEDIER CONCLUSIONS BEING REACHED. OF COURSE, SIMULTANEOUSLY WE COULD ARGUE WITH AMBASSADORS HERE.

THERE HAS BEEN A VISIBLE TIGHTENING UP REGARDING BERLIN ACCESS, FOR SIX MONTHS OR LONGER, BY SOVIETS AND GDR. IT NOW APPEARS PROBABLE (SEE DEPTTEL 1672 AMONGST OTHERS) THAT GDR WILL SHORTLY ASSERT PRETENSIONS IN THIS CONNECTION THAT COULD PROVE VERY TROUBLESOME. THE SOVIETS ARE PROBING AGAIN. MORE MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED THAN RECOGNIZING AUTHORITY OF GDR OFFICIALS AT CHECK POINTS, FOR STEPS COULD

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BE TAKEN BY SOVIETS AND GDR PREJUDICIAL TO FREEDOM OF WHOLE PASSAGE, ALLIED AND OTHERWISE, FROM ONE SECTOR AND ZONE TO ANOTHER.

ONE CAN ONLY SURMISE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. I WOULD GUESS THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBE FIRST AT ONE POINT AND THEN AT ANOTHER. WHERE THEY MEET FIRM RESISTANCE THEY MIGHT ABANDON AN ATTEMPT AND TRY ELSEWHERE. WHERE THEY SUCCEED INITIALLY, IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO SUPPOSE THEY WOULD DEVELOP THEIR ADVANTAGE. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE IN ALMOST EVERY CASE OF HARASSMENT DURING PAST YEAR HAD SOME FORM OF ADVANCE WARNING OF THREAT FROM SOVIET OFFICIALS. OUR PEOPLE IN BERLIN WOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND MUCH MORE FORCEFULLY AND PERHAPS THEREBY CREATE DETERRENT TO PROSPECTIVE SOVIET ACTION IF MISSION HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED THAT OUR POLICY WAS TO TURN TRAINS BACK.

IT IS ON SUCH REASONING THAT I BASE VIEW OF THE ADVISABILITY OF TURNING MILITARY TRAINS BACK, RATHER THAN CAPITULATING TO THE FIRST DEMAND, (IF IT IS EVER MADE BUT TO ADMIT, EVEN UNDER PROTEST, THE RIGHT OF GDR OFFICIALS TO DETERMINE OUR MILITARY RAIL OPERATIONS.

I AM THOROUGHLY AWARE THAT THIS QUESTION IS ONE OF SPECULATIVE JUDGMENT. IT COULD BE, AS STATED IN DEPTTEL 1675, THERE ARE NO "NEW DEVELOPMENTS OR ARGUMENTS WHICH WOULD WARRANT CHANGE OF DECISION ALREADY TAKEN", BUT I THINK THIS STATEMENT IS VULNERABLE.

MY SUGGESTION IS THAT PREVIOUS DECISIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY REVIEWED IN MATTERS AS IMPORTANT AS THIS ONE, EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS. IN THIS CASE, I BELIEVE THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RECENT CHANGES IN THE SITUATION. EVERY EVIDENCE, AND EVEN POSITIVE STEPS ALREADY TAKEN IN BERLIN,

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POINTS TO (A) HARDENING OF CONTROL OVER CIVILIAN PASSAGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST SECTORS AND EAST AND WEST ZONES; (B) AN INCREASING INSISTENCE ON THE PART OF GDR THAT SOVIETS TURN OVER MACHINERY OF CONTROLS, AND A TENDENCY ON PART OF SOVIETS, EVEN IF THEY MAY BE SOMETIMES RELUCTANT, TO ACCEDE TO SUCH DEMANDS.

AGAIN ONE CAN ONLY CONJECTURE WHETHER SOVIETS WOULD EVER RELINQUISH THEIR OWN SUPERVISION OVER ALLIED MILITARY TRAIN AND AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS. THERE ARE MANY REASONS, STEMMING MOSTLY FROM QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS AND CUSTOMS, AS WELL AS FROM DISTRUST OF FIDELITY OF SOME GDR OFFICIALS, WHICH MIGHT CAUSE THEM TO RETAIN THEIR DOMINATION IN THESE RESPECTS. ALSO, THE NATO COMMUNIQUE OFFERING PROSPECT OF FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING MAY INFLUENCE SOVIETS AGAINST ANY INTERMEDIATE AGGRESSIVE ACTIVITIES. BUT WE MUST BE PRUDENTLY PREPARED FOR ACTION TO THE CONTRARY.

ANOTHER NEW FACTOR IS THE AUGMENTED FEAR IN BERLIN OF WHAT NEW DIRECTIONS MIGHT BE GIVEN BY THE SOVIETS AND GDR TO THEIR PREVIOUS POLICIES THERE. THIS HAS BEEN APPARENT IN PUBLIC SPEECHES AND PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, AND WAS REFLECTED, FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE NATO MEETING BY THE CHANCELLOR'S DESIRE FOR A REAFFIRMATION OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE CITY.

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GASTON COBLENTZ OF HERALD TRIBUNE EUROPEAN EDITION HAS SEVERELY, THOUGHT I THINK UNJUSTLY, CRITICIZED THE WEAK REACTION OF THE ALLIES TO SOVIET AND GDR MOVES IN BERLIN. MAYOR BRANDT, AS YOU KNOW, ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO WAS IN A STATE OF GREATEST ALARM OVER THE SITUATION. THE SEARCH OF MAIL CARS ON THE ORDINARY TRAINS ALARMED THE PUBLIC. THE CONDEMNATION OF CURRENCY HOLDINGS DID NOT ALLAY ANXIETIES.

BRUCE

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NOTE: MR. REINSTEIN (GER) NOTIFIED 11:40 AM 12-22-57 CWO/FED
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Control:
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13221

DECEMBER 22, 1957

10:03 AM

FROM: BONN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1965, DECEMBER 22, 1 PM (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 1965, REPEATED INFORMATION PRIORITY BERLIN 389

REPEATED INFORMATION USAREUR HEIDELBERG 301 BY OTHER MEANS.

NOTHING IS EASIER THAN TO OBTAIN VIEWS OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC OR BERLIN OFFICIALS ON THIS SITUATION. THEIR EXPRESSIONS FLOW UNSOLICITED. THREE NIGHTS AGO AT MY HOUSE, MINISTERS LEMMER (ALL-GERMAN AFFAIRS) AND LINDRATH (FEDERAL ECONOMIC PROPERTIES), AND THE STATE SECRETARY FOR ALL-GERMAN AFFAIRS THEDIECK, WHOM WE HAD HOPED TO INTERROGATE ON OTHER SUBJECTS, TALKED UNTIL MIDNIGHT ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE IF THE SOVIETS TRANSFERRED REPONSIBILITIES IN THE BERLIN AREA TO THE GDR. THEDIECK WAS IN FAVOR OF MILITARY TRAINS GOING THROUGH BY FORCE, BUT ENTIRELY UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW THAT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. ANOTHER SPONSORED A TEMPORARY AIR-LIFT WHILE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS BEING APPROACHED. BUT ALL FELT, AND LEMMER IS A BERLINER, THE LOSS OF FACE CONSEQUENT UPON IMMEDIATE YIELDING TO GDR DEMANDS WOULD, IN ITS PUBLIC REPERCUSSIONS, BE FAR GREATER THAN WHAT WOULD ENSUE IF MILITARY TRAINS WERE TURNED BACK, EVEN THOUGH WE EVENTUALLY ACCEDED TO SOVIET PRESSURE.

NOR SHOULD WE FORGET THE VALUE TO THE GDR OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC TRADE. IF PROMPTLY MOBILIZED, IN SUPPORT OF A UNITED STATES TURNBACK POLICY, THE THREAT BY FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF A DIMINUTION OF SUCH TRADE COULD BE FORMIDABLE.

I AM FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE DIFFICULTY OF PERSUADING, IN CASE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SHOULD SPONSOR A TURNBACK, THE BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS TO THIS POINT OF VIEW.

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THE BRITISH, ALWAYS PRAGMATIC, PREFER, CERTAINLY IN THIS INSTANCE, THE EASY SOLUTION. WHAT INTERMITTENTLY MOTIVATES FRENCH POLICY IN THE GERMAN CONTEXT, I DO NOT PROFESS TO KNOW.

I REALIZE THE NECESSITY OF A COORDINATED ALLIED APPROACH TO BERLIN PROBLEMS, AND DO NOT ADVOCATE AN UNILATERAL STAND DESTRUCTIVE OF UNITY. BUT IF WE FELT STRONGLY ABOUT THIS, WOULD IT NOW BE WORTHWHILE TO APPEAL TO OUR ASSOCIATES TO REVIEW THEIR POSITIONS? CERTAINLY, THEY WOULD REGARD OVER- TURES TO THEM TO RECONSIDER AS URGENT THIS HYPOTHETICAL THESIS ACASSANDRA CRY. DESPITE THIS, OUR UNIQUE STANDING IN FEDERAL REPUBLIC IMPOSES AN OBLIGATION UPON US TO ASSERT LEADERSHIP. IF A MISTAKE IN COLLECTIVE JUDGMENT IS COMMITTED, IT IS NOT THE BRITISH AND FRENCH WHO WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE - THE ONUS WILL LARGELY FALL ON UNITED STATES.

I TRUST QUESTIONS TO WHICH I HAVE MADE REFERENCE WILL NEVER ARISE. THIS IS QUITE POSSIBLE. BUT I DO WANT TO TAKE THE LIBERTY OF REPEATING THAT, DIVIDED AS OPINION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IS ON THIS SUBJECT, I FEEL WE SHOULD REEXAMINE WHAT WE HAD PREVIOUSLY DECIDED. IF WE ADHERE TO CURRENT ATTITUDES, AND A CRISIS OCCURS, WE WILL BE AFTERWARDS DECLARED TO HAVE BEEN PUSILLANIMOUS IN HAVING SOFTLY ACCEPTED THE PERHAPS INEVITABLE BRUTALITY WITHOUT HAVING AT LEAST FIRST BRANDISHED OUR BIG STICK EVEN IN A FUTILE MANNER. IT IS THE FIRST STEP THAT COUNTS.

BRUCE

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Note: Mr. Reinstein (GER) notified 12/22/11:40 a.m. CWO/FED

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